

## Being Seen and Heard

By Michael Bradbury



Motorcycle accidents can be caused by a host of varied circumstances. Some may involve the motorcyclist's negligent conduct or careless driving; however, many others are caused by the fault of another driver on the road. The most common cause of motorcycle accidents is the failure of motorists to detect and recognize motorcycles in traffic. Given a motorcycle's small size, its visibility may be limited by glare or obstructed by other cars on the roadway. Not being seen on your motorcycle can be very unsafe. Here are a few ways to enhance being visible while riding your motorcycle.



The Motorcycle Safety Foundation advises to “present” yourself on your motorcycle as often as possible to ensure road visibility. Presenting yourself means to legally position your ride to show yourself in the greatest ways to traffic around you. There are three positions you can occupy in a lane; left, middle and right. On an undivided, 2 lane road, positioning yourself in the left lane, closest to the yellow centerline, makes

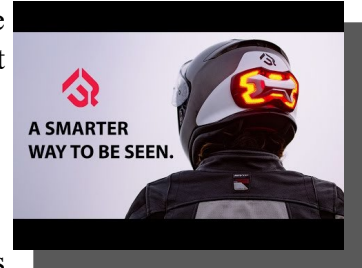
yourself the most visible to traffic, especially if entering your lane from the right. The converse is true as well. To be the least visible, positioning yourself in the right spot makes you harder to see and creates the least reaction time possible to traffic flow changes involving cars from the right. To be safer, travel in the left spot next to the centerline.

Presenting yourself when performing left turns from a left turn only lane is another way to be safer on the road. To present yourself, occupy the middle or right spot of the lane. This helps you be seen by opposing traffic by avoiding occupying blind spots and exposing yourself more to the traffic flow. Since most traffic accidents happen in intersections, it is even more important to be seen and this is another way to enhance your visibility to traffic.



Keeping your lights on, day and night and legally lighting up your motorcycle as much as possible is another method of presenting. Using your extra spotlights is a good start. Adding lighting as much as possible to your ride is another. One example is the Custom Dynamics supplied saddle bag latch lights that I added to my Harley Davidson 2008 Street Glide. They are on with my running lights and show my brake lights, making me more visible to traffic 90° to me and in general.

There is a great addition to your helmet that can make you more visible to those around you. Check out the options and see what fits your helmet the best.



A colorful safety vest is another way to make yourself more visible. Not always a popular option but still an option, nevertheless.

Being heard is a good way you can present too. The saying, “loud pipes save lives” refers to this but I believe some who have loud motorcycles are just trying to get attention. But hey, getting attention is part of the point here. When leading rides from a stopped position, I strategically use sound, revving my engine to alert my riders when the coast is clear, and we are leaving or turning. They still have to clear their lane themselves, but I think communicating this helps.



Revvng your engine can also alert riders around you by getting attention when you feel extra attention is warranted. Having a good horn can also be used when an immediate need to be seen and heard presents itself!

In conclusion, presenting yourself by making yourself more visible and strategically using sound while riding your motorcycle is a safer way to ride.

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